

# 2002 FISHING OUTLOOK

By Pat Headrick

Heading into a new fishing season, it looks as if North Dakota's lakes and the fish in them came through in good shape. Winter 2001-02 was another mild one, with little snow cover and, hence, no serious concern about winterkill.

North Dakota has been in the midst of wet cycle since 1993, with some short-term dry periods mixed in. Rising water levels were a boon to anglers. As lakes rose, they spread to adjacent areas, flooding dry land, inundating weeds and other vegetation. These areas when flooded created productive spawning habitat for northern pike and yellow perch. The result was a boom in perch and pike reproduction.

Statewide, water levels are down from last year, but there is little concern except for the southwest, said Terry Steinwand, North Dakota Game and Fish Department fisheries chief. "What we are really lacking statewide is snow pack here on the plains," he said. This could result in the reduction of what are called opportunistic lakes (those created by water flooding previously dry areas) and probably an increase in algae and weeds in some waters.

"Higher water levels in recent years have cloaked what was a consistent deterioration of aquatic habitat over the years," Steinwand said. As a result, managing the fishery is likely to be more challenging in the coming years when compared to past years.

Devils Lake is down about a foot from the peak that occurred last spring and Lake Sakakawea is about the same level as last year. For Sakakawea, although mountain snow pack is similar to last year, far-below-normal runoff is likely because the upper basin is so dry and the plains had little snowpack. March snowstorms in the western mountains and plains have boosted prospects for additional runoff into the Missouri and Yellowstone river systems.

The really bright spots for 2002 Steinwand suggests are good walleye and spring pike fishing on Lake Sakakawea and Devils Lake, an excellent spring trout fishery, and generally good prospects for many of the small lakes across the state that provide as much or more combined recreation than the big waters.

## PROSPECTS FOR 2002

The following information from Department fisheries biologists indicates the waters they believe likely hold promise for anglers. Lakes in the following sections are listed in order by county, with multi-county waters, such as rivers and larger lakes, listed at the end of each section.

To learn more about these waters, including details such as directions from the nearest town, species of fish available, and facilities such as boat ramps, camping, and picnic areas, see the 2002 North Dakota Fishing Waters Guide that also appears in this issue. Fishing waters are also listed in the 2002-2004 North Dakota fishing regulations guide.

Anglers are reminded to thoroughly review the fishing guide for information pertaining to lakes and rivers they wish to fish.

# NORTHERN PIKE

Pike note: The Game and Fish Department has an excellent publication, "There's More than One Way to Skin a Pike," that describes, with photos, how to remove bones from pike fillets. To receive a free copy, call 701-328-6300, e-mail to [ndgf@state.nd.us](mailto:ndgf@state.nd.us), or download the article from the Department's Internet site at <http://www.state.nd.us/gnf/ndoutdoors/articles-brochures/pike-how-to-filet/>. Copies are also available at all Department offices.

Photo Omitted

## West

The outlook for southwestern North Dakota fisheries is fair, reports Emil Berard, western district fisheries supervisor, Dickinson. Although the last major winterkill in 2000-01 affected some southwestern lakes, he said, recent mild winters, should allow stocked fish to recover quickly.

District lakes in northwestern North Dakota should provide some good pike fishing, according to Fred Ryckman, district fisheries biologist, Williston.

Berard and Ryckman noted conditions for pike in the following lakes:

**Bowman-Haley** (Bowman County) - A fair winter fishery for smaller pike.

**Cedar Lake** (Slope County) - Partial winterkill in 2000-01; still produces some pike angling for smaller fish.

**Cottonwood Lake** (Williams County) - Good numbers of pike from 2-5 pounds. Growing amounts of fishing effort and harvest, but still relatively little activity. Darkhouse spearfishing was fairly good during the winter of 2001-02, though activity was light, spearers were using this lake.

**Gascoyne Lake** (Bowman County) - A partial winterkill occurred in 2000-01. The lake still produces some pike angling in spring and winter.

**Heart Butte Reservoir** (Lake Tschida) (Grant County) - Continues to be fair for pike up to 15 pounds.

**Patterson Lake** (Stark County) - Fair for pike of 4-8 pounds.

**Powers Lake** (Burke County) - Good numbers of northern pike, with many 5-8 pound fish and some going well over 10 pounds. Fishing pressure and harvest are relatively light. Unfortunately, according to Ryckman, water clarity was not good enough to allow for much darkhouse spearfishing success, but anglers generally did quite well this past winter. An adjoining water body, Enget Lake, also contains pike.

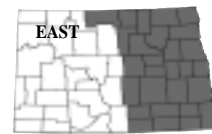
**Ray Reservoir** (Williams County) - Good numbers of pike up to eight pounds.

**Smishek Lake** (Burke County) - Fair numbers of pike, a few over 20 pounds.

**Tioga Reservoir** (Williams County) - Good numbers of pike up to eight pounds.

**Stanley Reservoir** (Mountrail County) - Good numbers of small pike.

**Cannonball, Heart, and Grand rivers and Cedar Creek** - Good spring fisheries for pike, especially downstream from low-head diversion structures.



## Central

Good water conditions and no significant winter kills translates into a continuation of a quality northern pike fishery in central district lakes, reports Dave Fryda, district fisheries biologist stationed at Riverdale.

Fryda, along with central district fisheries supervisor Jeff Hendrickson, Riverdale, suggest the following waters as likely northern pike fishing spots in central North Dakota:

**Brush Lake** (McLean County) - Good numbers of smaller pike.

**Buffalo Lodge Lake** (McHenry County) - Good numbers of fish.

**Coal Mine Lake** (Sheridan County) - Good numbers of pike with some larger fish up to 15 pounds.

**Cottonwood Lake** (McHenry County) - Good numbers of fish in the 6-8 pound category.

**Crooked Lake** (McLean County) - Good success for 4-6-pound fish.

**Lake Darling** (Renville County) - Anglers finding numerous year-classes of fish, with good numbers of larger pike.

**Hoffer, South** (Sheridan County) - Relatively abundant population.

**Rice Lake** (Emmons County) - Good numbers of harvestable-size pike.

**Rice Lake** (Ward County) - Good numbers of decent-size fish.

**Strawberry Lake** (McLean County) - Good numbers of small fish.

**Makoti Reservoir** (Ward County) - Abundant pike up to 6-8 pounds.

## East

Lakes in the eastern part of the state will continue to provide good northern pike fishing, according to district fisheries biologist Randy Hiltner, Devils Lake and Gene Van Eeckhout, Jamestown.

According to Hiltner, "in the northeast, there has not been any widespread winterkill the past two years, so if anything there should be even better opportunity to catch some big pike." Van Eeckhout shares the same opinion of southeastern lake pike fishing.

Van Eeckhout and Hiltner suggest anglers try these waters for northern pike this year:

**Armourdale Dam** (Towner County) - Good for small-to-mid-size pike.

**Buffalo Lake** (Sargent County) - Should continue providing good pike fishing.

**Barnes Lake** (Stutsman County) - This water should provide good pike fishing.

**Carpenter Lake** (Rolette County) - An excellent pike fishery. Located across the road from School Section Lake.

**Cherry Lake** (Kidder County) - Excellent pike fishing the last two years; ice anglers did well over the winter.

**Coldwater Lake** (McIntosh County) - Good to excellent pike fishing last summer and winter. Lots of pike.

**Dry Lake** (McIntosh County) - An excellent northern pike population. Anglers catching some big fish.

**Golden Lakes, North and South** (Steele County) - Good pike fishing should continue. Anglers may not take northern pike less than 24 inches.

**Lake Juanita** (Foster County) - Pike continue to do well as a result of mild winters and high water levels.

**Kalmbach Lake** (LaMoure County) - Pike fishing has slowed, but the lake is still a good choice for early season pike

**Lake Laretta** (Nelson County) - Has an excellent pike population with many fish in excess of five pounds.

**Mallard Marsh** (Stutsman County) - Should provide good pike fishing.

**Matejcek Dam** (Walsh County) - Good for some big pike.

**Lake Metigoshe** (Bottineau County) - Provides good northern pike fishing.

**Red Willow Lake** (Griggs County) - Continues to provide good pike fishing. Anglers may not take northern pike less than 24 inches.

**School Section Lake** (Rolette County) - Located across the road from Carpenter Lake. This water is an excellent pike fishery.

**Silver Lake** (Benson County) - Continues to produce nice northern pike. Anglers are reminded to check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for specific dates the lake is open to fishing.

**Sweetwater Lake** (Ramsey County) - Anglers took lots of nice northern pike through the ice.

**Tewaukon Lake** (Sargent County) - Located on Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge. Should continue to provide good pike fishing. Anglers may not take northern pike less than 24 inches.

**West Lake** (Logan County) - A big water that holds good numbers of fish.

## Missouri River System

With good pike populations, most of the Missouri River System has the potential for anglers to catch large fish.

Pike from the 1994-year class get larger every year, Jeff Hendrickson said. "A lot of them should be in the 15-plus pound range in 2002."

In northwestern North Dakota, Sakakawea's low level has greatly reduced opportunities for pike, according to Fred Ryckman. "Much of Sakakawea's headwaters area, the lower portion of the Little Muddy River, and other backwaters in the Williston area have all but dried up. Best reports from pike anglers are now farther downstream in Sakakawea in the Tobacco Garden and White Earth Bay areas."

## Devils Lake

Devils Lake expanded in size from 100,000 surface acres in 1997 to about 125,000 surface acres today. This expansion resulted in an enlarged pike fishery as flooded shoreline vegetation created new spawning habitat, according to district fisheries biologist Randy Hiltner.

"As has been the case the past several years, there will be a lot of pike fishing opportunities," Hiltner predicted for 2002. Boat anglers can expect good results when casting crank baits and similar lures near flooded vegetation. Excellent pike fishing can also be had from shore in late April-May by fishing off the Highway 19 and 281 riprap with lures or smelt.

# WALLEYE

## Missouri River System

The Missouri River System continues to support high walleye populations.

Lake Sakakawea holds most sizes of walleye, with many fish in the 4-8 pound category. This summer, anglers can expect to see lots of fish from the year-class of 1998. Fishing has been good for walleye in the last few years, which should continue in 2002, according to Jeff Hendrickson.

On the upper end of Sakakawea, anglers can look for walleye and sauger angling to remain very good, provided water levels stay high, said Fred Ryckman.

South of Garrison Dam, the Missouri River's spring walleye run is expected to be similar to last year's run, with plenty of fish in the 14-17-inch range, Hendrickson predicts.

Farther south on Lake Oahe, walleye will continue to be small, with mostly 14-17 inch fish being caught. A shortage of smelt continues and walleye growth, as a result of this scarcity, is slow in the Missouri River and Lake Oahe.

## Devils Lake

Devils Lake supports a good walleye population, with many small-to-mid-size fish. "Strong year-classes are coming up, with most fish less than 20 inches in length, however, recent netting surveys show the average size is increasing," Hiltner said. "Walleyes are experiencing significant natural reproduction in the current high water cycle at Devils Lake, which should sustain walleye fishing opportunities into the future," he said.

## Central

Garrison Diversion Unit lakes will continue to provide some of the better walleye fishing in the central part of the state, according to Dave Fryda. Anglers can expect continued high-quality fishing in these lakes:

**Lake Audubon** (McLean County) - Excellent fishing for eating-size walleye is expected. "The size and condition of walleye has improved substantially in the last year," Fryda said.

**Lake Brekken** (McLean County) - Adjacent to but not part of the McClusky Canal chain of lakes. Excellent walleye population, although they are smaller than those in the McClusky Canal chain.

**Lake Darling** (Renville County) - Low numbers of larger walleye but large recent year classes hold promise for the future.

**Froelich Dam** (Sioux County) - A fair population available in a variety of sizes.

**Heckers Lake** (McLean County) - This McClusky Canal chain-of-lakes water has a good walleye population comprised of multiple age classes.

**Hiddenwood Lake** (Ward County) - Good numbers of quality-size fish.

**Holmes Lake** (McLean County) - Excellent walleye population.

**New Johns Lake** (Burleigh County) - This McClusky Canal chain-of-lakes water has a good walleye population comprised of multiple age classes.

**East and West Park lakes** (McLean County) - These McClusky Canal chain-of-lakes waters have a good walleye population comprised of multiple age classes.

**Sweetbriar Dam** (Morton County) - Abundant population of small fish.

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## East

Eastern North Dakota's small lakes and reservoirs hold fair-to-good walleye populations. Because most of these waters are stocked annually, catch-and-release fishing is encouraged to help maintain a quality long-term fishery.

"Walleye populations in the southeast seem to be holding up to the pressure because of good water conditions and excellent forage," notes Gene Van Eeckhout.

Good walleye prospects in the east include:

**Lake Ashtabula** (Barnes County) - Walleye are probably less abundant than in previous years, according to angler reports last summer and early this winter.

**Carbury Dam** (Bottineau County) - Good population of walleye.

**Jamestown Reservoir** (Stutsman County) - Lots of small walleye in the system. A 14-inch-minimum-size limit applies to walleye in this lake for the next two fishing seasons.

**Lake Metigoshe** (Bottineau County) - Some nice walleye are available.

**Lake Upsilon** (Rolette County) - A good walleye population.

**James River** (Dickey County) - Dakota Lake Dam at Ludden had good walleye fishing during the winter.

**James River** (LaMoure County) - LaMoure Dam had good walleye fishing during the winter.

## West

Walleyes are doing well in larger, deeper waters such as Lake Tschida (Heart Butte) and Bowman-Haley Dam. Many smaller lakes also provide walleye fishing. Anglers are encouraged to catch-and-release walleye in smaller lakes because they can be fished down too easily.

Some western lakes to consider for walleyes:

**Indian Creek Dam** (Hettinger County) - An excellent walleye lake, with a mixture of age and size classes.

**Northgate Dam** (Burke County) - Angler harvest has reduced the overall walleye population, but still a fairly strong population, with most fish in the 14-17 inch range.

**Patterson Lake** (Stark County) - Although still young, a reliable fishery is developing. A high harvest of young fish has occurred and catch-and-release fishing is strongly encouraged.

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# CATFISH

Best catfishing in North Dakota is mainly found in the Red River, Heart River, and Missouri River systems. These following waters sometimes can provide exciting catfishing:

## East

**Red River** - Catfishing is excellent over the length of the river. The catfish population is stable in the northern reaches, (the Red flows south to north) and the southern stretch holds more, but smaller, fish. The area from Drayton to Pembina produces lots of trophy fish. Red River (and Bois de Sioux) anglers may take daily no more than one channel catfish greater than 24 inches in length.

**Sheyenne River** - Excellent at times below the dams at Lisbon and Fort Ransom.

## Missouri River System

**Missouri River** (Garrison Tailrace) - Provides some good fishing for smaller catfish, especially in the summer months. Mouths of tributaries may produce some bigger fish.

**Lake Oahe** - Catfish are second most abundant fish in Lake Oahe, most averaging about two pounds.

**Lake Sakakawea** - Good numbers of

cats throughout the reservoir. Catfishing better in the upper end.

**Upper Lake Sakakawea and Missouri River** (above the reservoir) - Good fishing; several large catfish taken over the winter. Here is where anglers will find the best chance to catch a big cat on the Missouri River System. The Missouri River System catfish population could easily support more angling and harvest, according to Fred Ryckman.

**Missouri River** (Williston to confluence) and Yellowstone River - Anglers taking lots of catfish during the open-water season with fair numbers ranging from 5-12 pounds. Ice fisherman also report good success. According to Fred Ryckman, this area receives little use and harvest and is a "greatly underutilized resource."

## West

**Heart Butte Reservoir** (Lake Tschida) (Grant County) - Has a fairly good fishery with many whopper catfish. This fishery extends up the Heart River to Patterson Lake, according to western district fisheries supervisor Emil Berard.

**Little Missouri River** - Good catfishing can be had on the river upstream to Medora. Success continues even farther upstream when river flows are high.

# PANFISH

## PANFISH

### (Yellow Perch, Crappie, Bluegill)

Although walleye and northern pike capture the lion's share of angler attention across the state during spring and summer, panfish are an overlooked resource in many waters.

Daily limits and possession limits have been changed statewide for perch, crappie, and bluegill. The daily limit is now 35 and possession limit is 175.

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## East

The region's many smaller lakes provide some excellent panfishing. Yellow perch, bluegill and crappie are among the more popular panfish. Some waters, such as Devils Lake, produce large perch from year to year. Other "new" lakes, many of them just big sloughs created by overflow from other areas, have strong perch populations and are providing lots of angling recreation.

Good bluegill and crappie lakes are rarer than perch lakes. Some waters may have lots of small bluegill and crappies, but few have numerous big fish.

District fisheries biologists Hiltner and Van Eeckhout suggest anglers consider the following waters for panfish:

**Lake Ashtabula** (Barnes County) - Anglers took 10-inch perch last fall and early this winter. Crappie fishing was good during the winter.

**Bisbee Dam** (Big Coulee) (Towner County) - A perennial perch fishery, usually fished hard in the winter.

**Carbury Dam** (Bottineau County) - Lots of perch with some bigger fish.

**Coldwater Lake** (McIntosh County) - Lots of small perch.

**Dion Lake** (Rolette County) - Provided good perch catches the past two years.

**Dry Lake** (McIntosh County) - Perch fishing has dropped off substantially.

**Harvey Dam** (Wells County) - Some nice crappie available.

**Homme Dam** (Walsh County) - Contains a decent crappie population with some nice fish.

**Jamestown Reservoir** (Stutsman County) - Good for crappies over the winter. Appears the population is lower than last year.

**Lake LaMoure** (LaMoure County) - Neither perch nor crappie populations are as good as in past years.

**Lake Laretta** (Nelson County) - Fair perch population with occasional big fish.

**Long Lake** (Bottineau County) - Good population of medium-size perch.

**Matejcek Dam** (Walsh County) - This water supports a decent crappie and perch population.

**Lake Metigoshe** (Bottineau County) - Contains some huge bluegills along with nice crappies.

**Red Willow Lake** (Griggs County) - This small lake has some good-size bluegills.



**Stump Lake** (Nelson County) - An established perch fishery that generated a lot of interest last winter.

## West

Fisheries supervisor Emil Berard and biologist Fred Ryckman list the following waters as good prospects for panfish in western North Dakota:

**Blacktail Dam** (Williams County) - Fair numbers of perch and bluegills; mostly smaller although some one-pound-plus fish of each species.

**Bowman-Haley Reservoir** (Bowman County) - A limited fishery for large bluegill and yellow perch.

**Camel Hump Dam** (Golden Valley County) - Nice-sized bluegills with good overall population, although they are mixed and hybridized with green sunfish.

**Davis Dam** (Slope County) - Many small bluegills, but good overall population.

**Epping-Springbrook Dam** (Williams County) - Fair numbers of perch; mostly smaller fish.

**Fish Creek Dam** (Morton County) - Good population of quality-size crappie.

**Heart Butte Dam** (Lake Tschida) (Grant County) - Improved fishery for quality-size perch, crappie, and white bass.

**Indian Creek** (Hettinger County) - Good numbers of larger bluegills up to two pounds.

**Leland Dam** (McKenzie County) - Supports a good bluegill population, although most are smaller fish.

**McGregor Dam** (Williams County) - Good numbers of perch, generally smaller fish, but supports a considerable amount of fishing activity.

**Northgate Dam** (Burke County) - Strong bluegill population, with many exceeding a pound. Water with most Whopper bluegill reports in the state in 2001. Catch and release strongly encouraged.

**Nygren Dam** (Morton County) - Fair to good population of bluegill; some nice-sized fish.

**Odland Dam** (Golden Valley County) - Good numbers of large bluegill and yellow perch.

**Patterson Lake** (Stark County) - A limited though improving fishery for quality-size crappie.

**Raleigh Reservoir** (Grant County) - Excellent bluegill population, with many fish more than one-half pound.

**Short Creek** (Burke County) - Good numbers of perch and bluegill with fair numbers of each species of more than one pound.

**Sather Dam** (McKenzie County) - Supports a good bluegill population, although most are smaller fish.

**Stanley City Pond** (Mountrail County) - Contains good numbers of bluegill and perch, but mostly smaller fish.

**Trenton Lake** (Williams County) - This Missouri River backwater has good numbers of crappies, most from 6-10 inches.

## Central

Central North Dakota lakes continue to offer good panfish angling, reports Dave Fryda. "Anglers can look for quality panfish of many species as a result of recent years' water quantity and lack of significant fish kills."

In particular, Fryda noted that yellow perch numbers have improved over much of his district. Some of the better waters for panfish anglers include:

**McDowell Dam** (Burleigh County) - The lake suffered a partial summer kill in 2001, but the bluegill population remains excellent with good numbers of quality-size fish.

**Arroda Lakes** (Oliver County) - Lots of crappies, some of which are keeper size.

**Lake Audubon** (McLean County) - Perch numbers are low but fish quality is high. Good catches have been reported during early ice periods the last two winters.

**Lake Brekken** (McLean County) - Fair population of bluegill of quality size. If you can find them, many are over a pound.

**Coal Mine Lake** (Sheridan County) - Low numbers of quality-size perch.

**Crooked Lake** (McLean County) - Strong perch population with various sizes available to anglers.

**Lake Darling** (Renville County) - Fair numbers of large perch taken. A good crop of small fish reportedly coming up.

**Froelich Dam** (Sioux County) - Fair numbers of perch; average to above-average size.

**Heckers Lake** (McLean County) - Lots of small yellow perch. Bluegill and crappie numbers have increased throughout

the McClusky Canal chain, with some quality-size fish available.

**Holmes Lake** (McLean County) - Fair population of bluegill of quality size. If you can find them, many are over a pound.

**Nelson Lake** (Oliver County) - Abundant bluegill and crappie populations.

**New Johns Lake** (Burleigh County) - Lots of small yellow perch. Bluegill and crappie numbers have increased throughout the McClusky Canal chain, with some quality-size fish available.

**East and West Park lakes** (McLean County) - Lots of small yellow perch. Bluegill and crappie numbers have increased throughout the McClusky Canal chain, with some quality-size fish available.

**Rice Lake** (Emmons County) - Fair numbers of large perch.

**Round Lake** (McHenry County) - Good catches of large perch reported.

**Strawberry Lake** (McLean County) - Good numbers of keeper-size yellow perch.

**Sweet Briar Dam** (Morton County) - Although bluegill fishing is inconsistent, the lake contains some good-sized fish.

## Devils Lake

Perch densities in Devils Lake are presently higher than during the early to mid-1990s. The population structure is a good mix of sizes with many fish in the 8-12 inch range. However, the perch have lots of food and space, which has produced a "tough" ice fishing bite. With a good perch hatch in 2001, the perch population looks to be in decent shape for the near future, according to Randy Hiltner.



# TROUT

The Game and Fish Department stocks trout in many waters throughout the state. They are fast growing, hard fighting, and in many cases can provide an instant fishery for anglers. There are rainbow, brown, and in some waters, cutthroat trout.

Trout do not reproduce naturally in North Dakota so Game and Fish must stock them annually.

Best trout fishing waters are described by those fisheries biologists who manage them:

## West

**Belfield Dam** (Billings County) - Limited numbers of smaller rainbow trout.

**Northgate Dam** (Burke County) - Still fair number of rainbow, but major summerkill in 2001 has reduced the population considerably.

**Baukol-Noonan Wildlife Management Area waters** (Divide County) - All three ponds contain good numbers of smaller rainbow trout and some well over 20 inches. These waters are lightly fished and could easily support more use.

**Camel Hump Dam** (Golden Valley County) - Rainbow and brown trout prospects are good for this year.

**Davis Dam** (Slope County) - Trout fishing should be good this year.

**Fish Creek Dam** (Morton County) - Fair brown and rainbow trout population. Limited number of smaller cutthroat trout.

**Indian Creek Dam** (Hettinger County) - Better known for walleye and panfish, but contains some nice trout in the 2-4 pound range.

**Kettle Lake** (Williams County) - Fair numbers of rainbows, with some over five pounds. Catch and release is strongly encouraged.

**Kota-Ray Dam** (Williams County) - Good numbers of trout, but mostly 12-15-inch fish. Fairly high angler use and harvest noted.

**North Lemmon Lake** (Adams County) - Very good rainbow trout lake with a few nice browns.

**McGregor Dam** (Williams County) - A good rainbow trout water. A few larger rainbows in excess of 20 inches are available.

**Nygren Dam** (Morton County) - Remains a fair trout lake.

**Raleigh Reservoir** (Grant County) - One of the better trout lakes in the western part of the state. Rainbows up to six pounds and a limited number of smaller brown and cutthroat trout.

**Sather Dam** (McKenzie County) - Mostly 12-14 inch fish, but a few much larger fish.

**Sheep Creek Dam** (Grant County) - The trout fishery is fair for smaller rainbow, brown, and cutthroat trout. The lake experienced a partial summerkill in 2001.

## East

**Strawberry Lake** (Bottineau County) - This put-and-take trout lake produces keeper fish by mid-summer.

**Turtle River** (Grand Forks County) - The Department continues stocking catchable trout in the spring and in the fall in

Photo Omitted





Turtle River State Park. These fish provide a stream fishery in an area close to a large population center.

**Blumhardt Lake** (McIntosh County) - Stocked annually with rainbows.

**Hooker Lake** (Rolette County) - A good rainbow population with catchable-size fish.

**Mooreton Pond** (Richland County) - Catchable trout are annually stocked to supply the demand in this high-use area. This lake may be renovated in 2002, according to Gene Van Eeckhout.

### Central

**Crown Butte Dam** (Morton County) - Historically produced some good-size fish but recent summer kill means anglers will primarily find recently stocked trout.

**Custer Mine Pond** (McLean County) - A good put-and-take fishery in a small, easy-to-fish pond.

**Lightning Lake** (McLean County) - A consistent producer of quality fish.

**Velva Sportsman's Dam** (Ward County) - Consistently a quality angling experience for nice-size browns and rainbows.

**McDowell Dam** (Burleigh County) - Frequent summer kills limit trout carry-over and the lake is primarily a put-and-take fishery. Provides a good trout fishery close to an urban area.

### Missouri River System

Lake Sakakawea's population of brown and rainbow trout has dropped off compared to a few years ago, but it still has some nice fish of both species.

Lake trout were stocked in Sakakawea from 1997-1999 and anglers have been catching them recently. Last summer they were reported to be 4-5 pounds in size, Jeff Hendrickson noted.

Anglers are encouraged to release lakereels until the population becomes established.

The high quality trout fishery from Garrison Dam Tailrace and downstream continues to produce many large trout each year. Cutthroat trout were introduced in 1999 and 2001 with very good results.

"The state cutthroat record was officially broken 10 times in 2000 and twice in 2001," Hendrickson cited as proof of the good fishing. He also noted that large brown trout have also been taken in the Garrison Dam Tailrace.

# SALMON

### Missouri River System

Since the end of the drought years in the early 1990s, the survival of stocked salmon continues to improve. For 2002, good numbers of 2-3-year-old fish, as well as some larger fish should be avail-

able to anglers. The best insurance for good salmon growth is a high population of rainbow smelt, a principal forage species, backed by good year-classes for the future.

Photo Omitted

# WHITE BASS

For anglers who appreciate the explosiveness of white bass, North Dakota offers some limited opportunity to fish for them. Though not common, when an angler does locate a school, these exciting fish can provide plenty of fast and furious action. White bass can be found in these waters:

### West

**Heart Butte Reservoir** (Lake Tschida) (Grant County) - The white bass population is expanding very slowly. The fish that are taken are good quality, according to Emil Berard.

### Devils Lake

The state record white bass, four pounds, eight ounces, was taken at Devils Lake. The lake holds good numbers of two-pound-plus fish that draw more and more anglers each year, according to Randy Hiltner. Best times to catch them are late May and early June, although good fishing is possible anytime there is open water.

### Missouri River System

Lakes Sakakawea and Oahe hold good numbers of fish up to 15 inches, although Oahe has more fish.

# BASS



For those North Dakota anglers who enjoy fishing for largemouth or smallmouth bass, there are many opportunities throughout the state.

The Department strongly encourages catch-and-release fishing for bass.

The following waters are recommended for largemouth and smallmouth by the fisheries biologists who manage them:

## Central

**Crown Butte Dam** (Morton County) - Abundant young largemouth bass.

**Heckers Lake** (McLean County) - Excellent smallmouth bass fishery with an abundance of fish up to 18 inches.

Largemouth bass in lower numbers but many are in the 3-4-pound category.

**McDowell Dam** (Burleigh County) - Good numbers of nice-sized largemouth bass.

**Nelson Lake** (Oliver County) - Hands-down the best largemouth bass lake in the state. Open water year-around allows fish to grow better than in other lakes. The current state record fish, eight pounds, seven and one-half ounces, was taken here in 1983.

**New Johns Lake** (Burleigh County) - Excellent smallmouth bass fishery with an abundance of fish up to 18 inches. Largemouth bass in lower numbers but many are in the 3-4 pound category.

**East and West Park lakes** - (McLean County) - Excellent smallmouth bass fishery with an abundance of fish up to 18 inches. Largemouth bass in lower numbers but many are in the 3-4 pound category.

**Riverdale Spillway Pond** (McLean County) - Smallmouths up to two pounds, but fairly low density.

**Sweet Briar Dam** (Morton County) - The lake supports a good largemouth population. Good numbers of 3-4-pound fish found mostly in northern part of lake.

## West

**Baukol-Noonan Wildlife Management Area waters** (Divide County) - Good numbers of smaller largemouth, with the biggest fish in Baukol-Noonan Dam.

**Belfield Dam** (Stark County) - A fair largemouth population but fish generally are less than one pound. Catch and release is strongly encouraged.

**Davis Dam** (Slope County) - A fair largemouth population, with a few fish up to four pounds. Catch and release is strongly encouraged.

Photo Omitted

**Camel Hump Dam** (Golden Valley County) - A good population of largemouth with some Whoppers (five pounds).

**Fish Creek Dam** (Morton County) - Should be good for largemouth and smallmouth bass.

**Heart Butte Reservoir** (Lake Tschida) (Grant County) - Although smallmouth bass are not common, they are usually large. The tailrace below the dam occasionally attracts good numbers of smallmouth.

**Indian Creek Dam** (Hettinger County) - Low density smallmouth population, but some nice fish. The lake also has largemouth.

**Leland Dam** (McKenzie County) - Good numbers of smaller largemouth. North Lemmon Lake (Adams County) - Some largemouth up to five pounds. The lake also supports smallmouth bass.

**McGregor Dam** (Williams County) - The lake has fairly good smallmouth numbers, mostly smaller fish, although some range to four pounds. Catch and release is strongly encouraged.

**Northgate Dam** (Burke County) - Good numbers of smallmouth, but mostly smaller fish. A few largemouth, but the population is down considerably from several years ago.

**Nygren Dam** (Morton County) - Contains a good population of largemouth, with some fish up to four pounds.

**Raleigh Reservoir** (Grant County) - Boasts a good largemouth population with plenty of whoppers. A limited number of smaller-size smallmouth bass available.

**Sheep Creek Dam** (Grant County) - A fair, young population of largemouth and smallmouth bass. The lake suffered a partial summerkill in 2001.

**Sather Dam** (McKenzie County) - The largemouth bass population is fairly strong, with some fish to four pounds; also a fair smallmouth population, but mostly smaller fish.

## East

**Brewer Lake** (Cass County) - The largemouth bass population has blossomed and the size structure is excellent. Smallmouth bass exhibit a broken population structure comprised of numerous small fish and an occasional large fish. Catch and release encouraged.

**Dead Colt Creek** (Ransom County) - The lake has an excellent largemouth bass population. The smallmouth bass population is dominated by smaller fish. Catch and release encouraged.

**Homme Dam** (Walsh County) - Decent largemouth fishery with some big fish.

**Larimore Dam** (Grand Forks County) - Several sizes of largemouth are present.

**Long Lake** (Bottineau County) - Some largemouth in the two-pound class.

**McVile Dam** (Nelson County) - A small reservoir with some very nice bass.

**Spiritwood Lake** (Stutsman County) - A strong population of smallmouth bass. Some big fish.

**Sheyenne River** (stretch between Fort Ransom and Lisbon) (Ransom County) - A relatively unused fishery. Provides good habitat for smallmouth.

## Missouri River System

Jeff Hendrickson reports a very good smallmouth population in Lake Sakakawea, with many large fish taken in recent years. A good number of those fish, he noted, were in the three-pound-plus range. Excellent reproduction the last seven years gives Lake Sakakawea's smallmouth fishery a bright future.